

# WVNG Coffey Break

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## Building Resilience through Physical Fitness



Welcome to the July 2011 edition of the WVNG Coffey Break, a monthly Wellness publication for all WV National Guard members and their families. The objective is to promote wellness, readiness and resilience by providing information and resources on topics relevant to daily living.

Continuing with our Resilience series, the focus this month is on Physical Health and Wellness. In previous years, *fitness* was commonly defined as the capacity to carry out daily activities without fatigue.

However, automation increased leisure time and in the days since the industrial revolution, this definition has become insufficient. Currently, *physical fitness* is the ability to function effectively throughout your workday, perform other usual activities, and still have enough energy left to handle emergency situations. Since this is an issue that pertains to all, please take a few minutes to read the following article before hitting "Delete" on your computer.

"Those who think they have not time for bodily exercise will sooner or later have to find time for illness." ~Edward Stanley

The mission of the National Guard Psychological Health Program is to advocate, promote and guide National Guard members and their families by supporting psychological fitness for operational readiness. For contact information regarding the Director of Psychological Health in your state or territory or other resources, go to: [www.jointservicessupport.org/](http://www.jointservicessupport.org/)

### 5 Components of Physical Fitness

Cardiorespiratory Endurance the efficiency in which the body delivers nutrients needed for muscular activity and transports waste products from the cells.

Muscular Strength - the greatest amount of force a muscle or muscle group can exert in a single effort.

Muscular Endurance - the ability of a muscle or muscle group to perform repeated movements with sub-maximal force for extended periods of time.

Flexibility - the ability to move the joints through an entire, normal range of motion.

Body Composition - the percentage of body fat a person has in comparison to his or her total body mass.

## 10 Workout Suggestions



**Break (brāk)** definition *verb*: To interrupt or stop *break a habit*; *noun*: A respite or brief pause *taking a break*.

Why does exercise make us happy and calm? Research shows that those who engaged in exercise, even a small amount, reported improved mental health. A recent study presented at the annual meeting of the American College of Sports Medicine showed that six weeks of bicycle training or weight training was effective for reducing feelings of irritability in women who had been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder.

Animal studies from researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health suggest that a moderate amount of exercise supports emotional resilience and help us to be “stress resistant.”

Getting and staying fit can be quite a challenge. These ten tips will help you to get the most out of your workout routine:

1. Start slow - Many beginners make the mistake of doing too much when they first start exercising. If you haven't worked out in awhile, start with a walking program of 20-30 minutes 3 days a week. Each session, add a few minutes to your workout. Then, increase your days.
2. Be consistent - Consistency is the best tip for maintaining a successful fitness regimen. Set a routine and stick with it. No excuses.
3. Follow an effective exercise routine - The American Council on Exercise surveyed 1,000 certified personal trainers about the best techniques to get fit. The top three suggestions: **Strength training** for 20 minutes twice a week, **Interval training** (walking 2 minutes/running 2 minutes and alternating this pattern throughout the duration of the workout), and **Increased cardio-aerobic** exercise.
4. Set realistic goals - Don't strive for perfection or an improbable goal that can't be met. Focus instead on increasing healthy behaviors.
5. Use the buddy system - Find a friend or relative who also wants a healthier lifestyle and exercise together. Encourage one another. Use this as an opportunity to enjoy one another's company and to strengthen the relationship.
6. Make your plan fit your life - You don't need fancy exercise clothes or a gym to get fit. If you've got floor space, try simple exercises to target areas such as the hips, legs, or arms. Aim for 10-12 repetitions of each exercise, adding more intensity and repetitions as you build strength.
7. Pick an activity you enjoy doing - If you hate weights, don't go to the gym. And, choose something that is convenient. Rock climbing might be a great workout, but if you live in the city, it's not something you'll be doing every day.
8. Work out when you have the most energy - If you're a morning person, schedule your fitness activities early in the day; if you perk up as the day goes along, plan your activities in the afternoon or evening. Working out when you have the most energy will yield the best results.
9. Eat regularly throughout the day - This will ensure you have the energy to complete your workout.
10. Be patient - Finally, remember that even if you follow all these tips, there will be ups and downs, setbacks and victories. Just be patient and Don't Give Up! If you hang in there, you will see solid results.

“To smoke or not to smoke:  
I can make of either a life-  
work.”

Mignon McLaughlin

## Healthy Diet: End the Guesswork



You're trying to eat a healthy diet, but you're not sure how much of which nutrients to get. Just what constitutes a healthy diet? Here are some recommendations designed to promote health and prevent disease, based on the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, issued by the Dept. of Agriculture. Keep in mind that if you have high blood pressure, heart disease or other conditions, your diet recommendations may be different.

- Pyramid vs. Plate - The familiar food pyramid developed by the Department of Agriculture has been replaced by the Plate. Below is a diagram. Basically, make half your plate fruits and vegetables. Half your grains need to be whole grains and switch to fat-free or 1% milk. Avoid oversize portions and drink water instead of sugary drinks. Choose foods low in sodium.
- Water - How much water does the average, healthy adult living in a temperate climate need? In general, doctors recommend 8 or 9 cups. If you drink enough fluid so you rarely feel thirsty and produce 6.3 cups or more of colorless or slightly yellow urine each day, your fluid intake is probably adequate.
- Fiber - Dietary fiber, found mostly in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, is probably best known for its ability to prevent or relieve constipation. However, fiber can also reduce your risk for diabetes and heart disease. The National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine recommends 38 grams of fiber for men and 25 grams for women under 50 years of age and 30 grams for men and 21 grams for women over 50.
- Read nutrition food labels - Food labels are intended to help consumers make healthier choices. Pay attention to serving size, how many servings are in a package, and to determine the amounts of nutrients, such as fats, sodium, and fiber in each product.
- Caffeine - For most healthy adults, moderate doses of caffeine - 2 to 4 cups of brewed coffee a day - aren't harmful. However, some people are more sensitive to caffeine than others. Other factors include body mass, age, medication use, and health conditions.
- Sodium - Many processed and prepared foods already contain plenty of sodium, and it's these foods that contribute the most sodium in our diet. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend limiting sodium to 2,300 mg a day or 1,500 mg if you are 51 or older, are black, or if you have high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease. Read food labels. Watch out for foods labeled "reduced sodium" or "light in sodium." Try to avoid products with more than 200 mg per serving. And, check the serving size. Eat more fresh foods, remove salt from recipes if possible, and use herbs, spices, and other flavorings to enhance food.
- Alcohol - If you choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation - up to one drink a day for women or two drinks a day for men. Examples of one drink include beer (12 oz.), wine (5 oz.), or distilled spirits (1.5 oz.).

"Tell me what you eat, I'll tell you who you are."

Anthelme Brillat-Savarin



## *Breaking Away with Dr. Daniela Lupu*

### Catching the Elusive Zzzz

There are many behaviors that contribute to a healthy life style. A key component, frequently overlooked, is sleep. Indeed many articles have been written about the fact that we are a sleep deprived nation. There simply is not enough time to do everything and sleep is sacrificed for a few more waiting hours. Unfortunately, this habit wreaks havoc on one's overall health contributing to poor performance, weight gain, impaired memory and attention, heart problems, and early aging. Important functions, such as neuronal regeneration and hormonal discharges that can only occur while sleeping, are disrupted when sleep time is habitually reduced.



Sleep, then, is a priority that should not be short-changed. Here are a few suggestions that can improve your sleep quality and your overall quality of life.

- Identify the number of sleep hours needed to feel rested. Most adults require on average 7 to 9 hours of sleep. However, some need only 4 to 5 hours to feel rejuvenated. Children and young adults, who are still growing, require on average about 9 to 10 hours of sleep.
- Make it a habit to go to bed at the same time, even on weekends and vacations. Your body will then begin to send you cues that it's beginning to retire.
- Exercise daily for at least 30 minutes and at least 3 hours before bedtime. This helps in the reduction of stress.
- Make your bedroom environment conducive to sleep by maintaining the room comfortably cool, dark and free of stimulating items (TVs, computers, ipods).
- Create a relaxation routine prior to going to bed. This could include taking a bath, listening to soothing music, drinking tea or milk. Avoid alcohol since it disrupts the sequence of sleep stages.
- If you cannot sleep, instead of tossing and turning, get out of bed and do something until you feel tired again.
- If you're worried or anxious about something, write it down. Journaling helps the brain unload and shift its attention on getting rest.
- If you're experiencing chronic insomnia consider a medical consult.

You will find that as you get the amount of rest you need, you will have more energy, be more efficient and creative and feel happier overall.



"The average amount of sleep required by the average person is five minutes more."

Wilson Mizener



## *The Final Sip*

In recent months, physical fitness has been getting a lot of attention in the military due to higher standards. And, although it is important to pass a physical fitness test, the real message why we should think more about what shape our bodies are in often gets lost. Physical fitness is more than just keeping our weight in check. There are many reasons why we should get off the couch and be active. The real answer to why we need to be conscious of our physical fitness can be found by asking two questions:

- How long do we want to live?
- What type of life do we want to have when we become old?

Now that I am past 50, I am more aware of my physical health. I made the decision six months ago to live a lifestyle that will give me as much *quality* time with my children and hopefully, grandchildren, as is in my control. To be blunt, I was unmotivated, overweight, and out of shape. I hated to exercise and would rationalize why I wasn't going to the gym when my spouse and children discussed their exercise routines. Initially, becoming part of the 130th AW was the motivator. It's difficult to promote total wellness when you aren't practicing it yourself. So, I started walking on a treadmill 3 times a week. I set small goals: walking longer distances, steeper incline, increased speed. Eventually, I moved to an elliptical machine, added weight training, and running. I had a few setbacks: knee and foot problems, but I worked through them by riding a bike until I could get back to the regular routine. I now exercise at least 6 days a week and have been surprised by my commitment. Although I lost weight, I found that weight loss was secondary to improved health and increased energy. I learned first-hand that exercise is a natural stress management tool. Most importantly, I became more content with life and who I am. On my bucket list is running a 5k.

I share this with you not to gloat or to pat myself on the back, but to say to you personally, "If I can do it, anyone can."

Remember the Nike motto, "Just Do It?" That's my challenge to you. Grab a friend or get moving by yourself, but just do it. Passing a fitness test is important, but taking steps to live a longer, healthier, and happier life is essential. In the process, perhaps you can be a role model to others that are struggling.

Unmotivated? Reach out for assistance. We're in this together.

Feedback on these articles is welcomed. If you have a concern about yourself or a family member, feel free to contact Donna, Daniela, or myself. Contact information is listed below. Services are free and confidential. We look forward to hearing from you. So.....Step back, take a Coffey Break, and Drink to Your Health!

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"Strength is the capacity to break a chocolate bar into four pieces with your bare hands - and then just eat one of the pieces."

Judith Viorst

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